

## Customized Concrete Mixer

"We operate a business installing residential fencing so we often mix dozens of batches of sakrete per day. The modifications we made to our concrete mixer save us a lot of time," says John Bontrager, East Earl, Penn.

He added a hose reel under the mixer that has 350 ft. of hose on it. "After we add sakrete to the mixer drum, we pull the hose out and hook it up to a faucet on the house," says Bontrager. "It fills a 5-gal. bucket on top of the mixer until a cattle trough float shuts it off. Then we pull a chain to release a toilet tank flusher valve in the bottom of the bucket, which releases the right amount of water into the mixer's drum. The water flows through a hollow vinyl 2 by 6 that extends from the bucket and over the drum. The bucket automatically refills for the next batch."

Four bags of sack crete are added to the drum, and then a 6-ft. long hose is used to add just enough water to get the final correct consistency in the mixer. The material is then dumped into a self-propelled, stand-behind, home-built concrete buggy.

The mixer is operated by a small Honda gas engine. They remounted the mixer's choke and starter rope to the dumping end of the mixer so they can start and stop the mixer without having to walk around to the other side of it. A pressure washer mounted under the mixer is plumbed in for cleanup afterward.

"This setup eliminates having to use separate hoses for everything. We make 20 to 30 batches of concrete every day, so if we can cut a minute off each batch that adds up pretty fast," says Bontrager.

To wind up the hose he pushes a lever to tighten a belt off the mixer pulley, which turns the reel.



**Hose reel under concrete mixer hooks up to faucet on house. It fills a 5-gal. bucket on top of mixer, which releases water into mixer's drum.**

The concrete buggy was made out of an old mower. The mower's sheet metal and mower deck were removed and the frame shortened 13 in. The steering wheel and controls were then reversed so the entire unit runs "backward". A dumpable wheelbarrow tub was added to haul concrete.

"It can carry four bags, or 320 lbs., of concrete," says Bontrager. "I paid \$150 for the mower and \$75 for another engine. It has hauled well over 1 1/2 million lbs. of concrete in the past 3 1/2 years. Sure beats pushing a wheelbarrow."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Bontrager, 218 Reading Rd., East Earl, Penn. 17519 (ph 717 445-9484; johnbon@frontiernet.net).



Self-propelled "concrete buggy" was made by cutting down the frame of a Deere hydrostatic riding mower and mounting a wheelbarrow tub over the drive wheels.

## Walk-Behind "Concrete Buggy"

John Bontrager made a self-propelled "concrete buggy" by cutting down the frame of a Deere 111 hydrostatic riding mower and mounting a wheelbarrow tub on back.

"I own a business installing residential fencing and mix batches of sack crete to set the fence posts. I dump material from the concrete mixer drum into the my homemade buggy. It saves a lot of time," says Bontrager.

"I modified the machine so I can stand behind the steering wheel and put the transmission in reverse to drive it."

He cut 13 in. off the back end of the mower frame, removing the seat and hood but keeping the steering wheel. The wheelbarrow tub was then bolted to the frame. The machine's hydrostat speed lever, throttle and brakes

were rerouted so Bontrager can operate them by hand.

"It works good and didn't cost much to build," says Bontrager. "I paid \$150 for the mower. The original engine was worn out so I replaced it with a 12 hp Briggs & Stratton that I bought for \$75. My total cost was less than \$300."

"I added a 4-in. high plastic splash guard on the back side of the tub to keep the concrete from splashing onto me. I use a shovel to scoop the material out into post holes."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Bontrager, 218 Reading Rd., East Earl, Penn. 17519 (ph 717 445-9484; johnbon@frontiernet.net).



"It's like having a giant lawn mower with the deck out in front of me," says Junior Schneider, who converted a SPFox silage chopper to cut brush and small trees.

## Forage Chopper Revamped To Shred Brush

A 35-year-old self-propelled silage chopper has a new job cutting brush on Junior Schneider's Nebraska ranch.

"It's like a giant lawn mower with the deck out in front of you," says the Burwell, Nebraska, rancher. "It can shred 5 to 6-ft. tall cedar trees."

The invasive trees were taking over his pasture, and he couldn't keep up cutting them by hand. So a couple of winters ago, Schneider revamped the old Fox chopper. The harvesting components were worn out, but everything else worked well. He removed the knife housing and blower and cut the frame off 3 ft. from the front. He left the engine, drivetrain and cab in place and fitted the front with 3-pt. hitch arms off a salvage tractor. He used the belt drive from the chopping housing to run a 30 gpm hydraulic pump. He added oil coolers from an old Deere pull-type swather and a 12-volt electric fan to keep the hydraulic oil from overheating.

Once the swather was rebuilt, he mounted a Brush Wolf brush cutter, designed for skid loaders, on front.

"You can see exactly where you're going," Schneider says. He raises the cutter to take off the top of taller trees, then works his way down. The Brush Wolf can handle stumps up to about 4 in.

Schneider says he likes the way it chops the trees up, leaving a green wreath on the ground. Within a year it mulches down. It's



Unit can shred 5 to 6-ft. tall cedar trees.



Schneider designed mounting brackets to attach brush cutter to front of chopper.

preferable to just cutting down trees and still having to deal with them.

Besides trees, Schneider cuts brush and grass and has tallied 400 to 500 hours with the machine. He estimates it cost about \$5,500 to adapt the Fox chopper.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Junior Schneider, 82525 Jones Canyon Rd., Burwell, Neb. 68823 (ph 308 346-4852; schneider1@nctc.net).

Chainsaw bar bolts to wooden frame. A knob at one end of the bar is used to advance the chain.



## "Made It Myself" Chainsaw Sharpener

Sharpening chainsaws is an easy job for Ken Voigt, who used an electric motor and a right angle grinder to make his own sharpener.

"I built it because I don't like fighting with a file while the chain is still on the bar. If the chain is too loose it'll tip sideways on the bar. But if you tighten the chain so it's solid on the bar, you can't turn it. My chainsaw sharpener keeps the chain nice and tight so it won't move."

He started with a new chainsaw bar which he bolted to a wooden frame. He puts the chain to be sharpened on the bar and uses a knob at one end - connected to a pulley with a slot cut into it - to advance the chain. An electric motor that's bolted to the frame is used to shaft-drive the angle grinder, which trims the rakers between the chain's teeth. Another knob, located below the motor and

connected to a fine-threaded bolt, is used to raise or lower the grinder in order to adjust the depth of the cut.

"I made the slot in the pulley .050-in. wide because that's the size of the drive links on the chains that I use. It's important to position the grinder at a right angle to the chain so you can grind the rakers evenly at the top."

He uses a Dremel tool equipped with a 5/32-in. dia. stone to sharpen the chain's teeth.

A vise grip with two hooks welded onto it, one hook per jaw, is used to keep the chain tight. One hook connects to a strong spring hooked to the pulley knob, and the other to an I-bolt on the table.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ken Voigt, 9208 Pasture Lane, Wausau, Wis. 54403 (ph 715 842-8471; KV57@aol.com).